ture, especially, provides all three of these things. And this particular work of literature provides another reward, as well. The process of discovery that students engage in studying the *Meno,* a process they see repeated in the dialogue, itself, gives them a model for a method they can use in making further discoveries on their own.

I will be pleased to mail to interested readers copies of assignments, with student papers, which I have designed to heighten students' awareness of the dialectical process in the *Meno* and to permit them to master the dialectical process themselves. Please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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Philosophy as a Discipline

Concerning the recent exchange in *Teaching Philosophy* (1:1, Summer, 1975) on the advocacy method of teaching philosophy ("The Advocacy Method," by Ronald Reed, and "The Advocacy Method: A Reply," by Craig Channell), I must concur with Channell's position with respect to the causes of the declining interest and popularity of philosophy, and I am also in agreement with him that the pedagogical problem is that of changing the view of the student as to what philosophy is. That the advocacy method as described by Reed is a distortion of what philosophy is, and that it possibly has counter-productive effects is made clear in Channell's article. The problem is patently one of presenting philosophy as a *discipline* to students, i.e., it is essentially that of bringing them to recognize that philosophy is, as Channell says (p. 41), an "ongoing critical activity of developing theories to describe, explain, or account for certain aspects of human experience." Unlike Channell, however, I have found that the presentation of arguments for this position regarding the nature of philosophy as a discipline is a *necessary* condition to the successful teaching of philosophy. If learners are to get on with the tasks of doing problems in logic, ethics, social-political philosophy, and epistemology so that the doing of these problems is a significant educative experience for them, surely they must first understand the nature of the inquiry they are engaged in—and they must understand the nature of this inquiry in such a way that it is adequately distinguished from other kinds of inquiry (disciplines), e.g., the sciences.

I have found what can best be described as an "epistemic-analytical" method to be very fruitful in my introduction of the nature of philosophy as a discipline to learners who have no, or virtually no, academic background in philosophy. I initially ascertain from students their beliefs as to what the term "philosophy" means, asking them to describe in as few words as possible what they think philosophy is. My findings each semester are essentially the same as described by Channell, i.e., most of my students hold that philosophy is merely a matter of opinion or personal belief (as distinct from justified true belief), that at most it is a matter of the history of others' ideas or a quasi-religious sort of commitment that is arbitrary, i.e., no justification is required. Invariably, however, one or two students will describe philosophy as having something to do with reason. This is sufficient for me to point out that beliefs which are a matter of reason, of having reasons where these are in some sense justifiable, are surely not simply personal opinions, personal values, preferences, or religious commitments. I attempt to bring them to understand that when we involve ourselves in the task of sorting out beliefs or statements which may in some sense be justified from those beliefs or statements which we do not properly seek to justify, such as personal tastes in dress or appetite, we are involved in a philosophic task. It then becomes obvious, and I make it my purpose to develop the fact that it is obvious, that the term "philosophy" is being used in at least two significantly different senses. I agree with my students that in ordinary language the word "philosophy" is used quite often to mean "personal opinion," "one's attitudes, personal preferences, views of the world," etc. I emphasize the fact, however, that whenever we attempt to set

forth *justifications* for our beliefs, we must appeal to standards which it is one of the tasks of philosophers to describe and that our concern then is one in which our beliefs or claims are subject to the standards any knowledge claim is subject to. That is, they are in some sense intersubjectively verifiable and subject to public rules of evidence. The significance of this kind of presentation is to contrast the ordinary language use of the term "philosophy" and a constructed (formal) language use of the term where rigorous logical and other standards for its use must be met. The ordinary language use of the term is clearly ambiguous and arbitrary and it is the one most of my students have upon entering my classes. I emphasize that it is the formal use of the term which I intend to teach them with respect to logical, ethical, epistemological, and social-political questions. Of course the students do not at this point understand the distinctions between ordinary and formal languages, but with respect to the use of the term "philosophy," they are sufficiently aware that the distinction is one between arbitrariness, ambiguity and imprecision on the one hand, and clarity, precision and justification on the other.

My next concern is to present a very broad conceptual schema which logically and epistemically distinguishes philosophy as a discipline, a kind of inquiry, from science. Students invariably enter my classes with respect for the sciences as an objective, truth-seeking inquiry however much some of them may hold the sciences responsible for social abuses. My final objective in this is to illustrate the significance and far-reaching consequences of the neglect of philosophy in educational systems where the concern seems to be primarily with the development of narrowly applied skills in learners. The neglect of the development of the critical inquiry methodology which is definitive of the doing of philosophy is detrimental to the doing of other kinds of inquiry as well, e.g., the sciences, and it is exactly this, in part, which I set out to show. I seek to demonstrate that philosophical questions and answers are logically prior to the questions and answers of other kinds of disciplines such as the sciences. Once my students are acquainted with the kinds of questions philosophers ask, i.e., logical, epistemological, ethical, and social-political philosophical questions, and how these questions differ epistemically from science questions, it then becomes easier for them to understand the necessity for asking these questions prior and relative to other kinds of questions such as scientific questions.

To conclude, we will have greater success in the teaching of philosophy if philosophy is introduced as an ongoing critical activity of developing theories to describe and explain certain aspects of human experience—that is, philosophy is a discipline.

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